

SECRET

25X1

NFAC 2421-81

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

27 APR 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : [REDACTED]
Acting NIO for East Asia

SUBJECT : East Asia Warning Assessment

25X1

The following items were discussed by the Community Representatives at the 22 April Warning Meeting. (U)

Thailand: Aftermath of the Attempted Coup

1. The outlook for the longevity of the Prem Government is not good, even though Prem has emerged from the attempted coup in a temporarily somewhat stronger political position. He has yet to use the opportunity presented by the coup to demonstrate effective and decisive leadership. In the absence of forceful action on his part -- changes in the Cabinet, more aggressive management of pressing economic problems, a firm hand in dealing with the coup plotters -- he is unlikely to sustain the support from the military he will need to prolong his government. For the next several months, however the military -- the likely source of any coup attempt -- will be supportive of Prem as it seeks to get its own house in order. If Prem's lackluster performance continues, pressures for change will build as the traditional 1 October date for rotations, promotions and retirements within the military approaches. Before the date, however, Prem -- whatever his performance -- is likely to face renewed criticism from the civilian politicians, particularly once the National Assembly is reconvened. Should he prove unable to deal with pressures from the politicians, there may be an acceleration in the determination within the Army to establish a stronger Government without Prem. (S)

25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

2. An army coup, however, would be unlikely to result in a significant change in either foreign or domestic policy. This might occur only if certain civilian politicians took power on their own -- a most unlikely eventuality. Moreover, Thailand's role in ASEAN particularly its position as a point man in dealing with Kampuchea has not been significantly altered by the coup attempt. Nonetheless, Thai preoccupation with internal developments and the reserve with which some of the ASEAN states have viewed Thai policy may combine to weaken the Thai position. (C)

Indochina: Thai-Kampuchean Border

3. The indicators evident last month which seemed to suggest increased Vietnamese activity in the border area in retrospect now appear to have been directly related only to the fleshing out and sustaining the Vietnamese presence in the area. Activity has not picked up and with the advent of early, heavy rains in the area substantial Vietnamese offensive activity is not likely. (S)

4. Reviewing what has been a pattern of predicting limited offensives in this area which fail to materialize, analysts agreed that too much attention appeared to be focused on often ambiguous indicators. These tend to reinforce analysts perception of what it would be logical for the Vietnamese to be doing. In general, the pattern that seems to have emerged is one of relatively limited Vietnamese activity, mostly of a defensive nature. It is unlikely that this pattern stems simply from Vietnamese complacency, since in the dry season just ending the Vietnamese forces have done relatively poorly, the Kampuchean rebels relatively well -- at a time of year when the reverse might be expected to be the case. (S)

Philippines: Outlook before the Presidential Election

5. Marcos is currently moving to co-opt the moderate opposition to ensure he has an opponent in the forthcoming election. In the weeks before the 16 June election there are likely to be so small, isolated anti-government demonstrations, public posturing by politicians but no significant threat of large scale violence or unrest. The return of Benito Aquino is not apt to stir much unrest even if, as promised by Marcos, he is arrested. There have been scattered reports suggesting that radical groups such as the remnants of the 6 April movement may try to carry out acts of terrorism but there is serious question as to their capability to do so and even their viability in the wake of Government arrests.

SECRET

SECRET [REDACTED]

25X1

China-US Relations

6. On the strategic level, the PRC is comfortable if not pleased with the Administration's strong commitment to defense and the tone of its policy in dealing with the USSR. There are, nonetheless, abiding concerns in Beijing about the direction of bi-lateral relations with the US in large measure stemming from the Administrations handling of Taiwan policy before coming into office. In the absence of any movement on the Taiwan issue in the current context the situation improves from the PRC's perspective. Nonetheless, Chinese officials have made a substantial effort to convey the view that should the US provide military equipment to Taiwan -- particularly at an early date and in substantial quantities -- there would be serious adverse developments in the relationship. The Chinese position, while containing an element of posturing, is nonetheless rooted in reality, and a vigorous response can be anticipated particularly if such a move occurred in the near term. (S)

[REDACTED] 25X1

SECRET [REDACTED]

25X1

Distribution

1 each - DCI

DDCI

ER

DD/NFA

DD/NFAC

SACI/NFAC

NFAC Action Staff

NIO/W

NIO/EA Chrono

NFAC Registry